

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Essay Contest – “This Place Matters”

For the 2018 Archaeology & Historic Preservation Month, the South Dakota State Historical Society sponsored a statewide essay contest for all students in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, the year in which South Dakota history is taught. The purpose was to enable students to achieve a better appreciation of their historic resources, the stories they tell, and why they should be maintained.

Students were asked to write a 100-400 word essay using this year’s theme of “This Place Matters.” It could be about any South Dakota location that is at least 50 years old, why it is a favorite place for them, and why it should be saved. It did not need to be a historic site.

Entries were judged on quality of writing, content and theme, and originality of thought. There were 50 entries from across the state. The names of the winners and copies of their essays, as submitted, are below.

### **The first place winner was Makena Jutting from Tea Area Legacy Elementary School.**

She won a \$100 cash prize and a one-year family membership to the South Dakota State Historical Society (a \$50 value).



*Click on image to view larger.*

### **“The Heart of Sioux Falls” Falls Park, Sioux Falls, SD**

*A cool mist hits my face as I stand by the waterfall. Rocks surround me with many people around. Queen Bee Mill and The Overlook Café. Can you guess where I am? I’m at Falls Park in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Or as I like to call it, “The Heart of Sioux Falls”. Native Americans were the first to visit the amazing falls. They later told stories to European explorers. It has been the center of attraction in Sioux Falls since 1856. There are many things there such as Queen Bee Mill. The mill opened in 1881. It took almost \$500,000 to construct. It could process 1,500 bushels everyday. Unfortunately, it closed in 1883 due to inadequate water power and low wheat supply.*

*The City of Sioux Falls was founded in 1856. A small island was located upstream of the main falls. Most people call it “The Island”. It was later called Brookings Island, then even later called Seney Island. It was a popular recreational spot for many. In 1907, the channel around the Island was closed as there was a need to increase flow to the hydroelectric plant.*

*Falls Park is an important place, not only to myself, but to many people. If it’s not already, it needs to be preserved. First, the falls is part of the Big Siouix River, which runs through Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota. It is a water source to many towns and rural areas including the City of Sioux Falls in South Dakota. Unfortunately, the river needs to be cleaned up. It is the 13<sup>th</sup> most dirty river in the nation. It is an educational and historical resource for our schools. Many schools go on field trips there. All field trips have to be educational and due to the history, it is very educational. It has many plaques posted throughout the park telling about important people in South Dakota. The statues, structures, and art are dedicated to many historical people. Without these items, the history would be lost. Another reason it’s important is because it’s the number one tourist attraction in Sioux Falls. Not only the number one attraction to tourists, but also number one in the whole city!*

*I’ve had many memories there since I can remember. Family get-togethers, a place to meet friends, and exploring all of its structures are all precious memories I have.*



**Josie Spiering from Webster Area Elementary School took 2<sup>nd</sup> place.** She won a \$50 cash prize and a one-year family membership to the South Dakota State Historical Society.

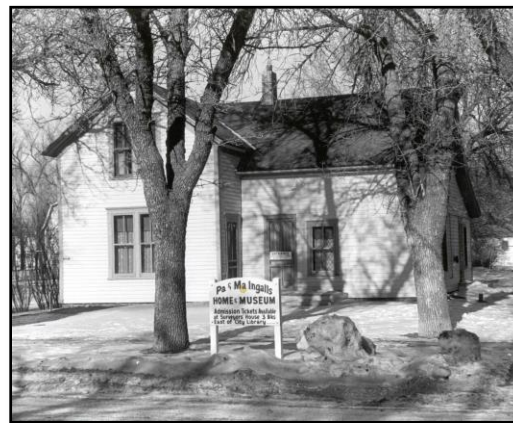
**“This Place Matters”  
My Grandparent’s Farm in Day County**

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*My grandparents, Donald and Genevieve Gaikowski’s, farm was one of the best. First, I like it because it still has fascinating things from long ago. One of my favorites is a very old stove. The stove looks like the one they used in Laura Ingalls Wilder’s time. Next, I like how many people lived in the house. My mom and her eleven siblings lived on this farm, along with my grandparents. The house was crowded in every room. If I was there I wouldn’t have liked being jam-packed like that. Lastly, I adored the big barn. When you walked in, it felt like a different place. It felt cooler and looked way different than any other barn because it was so big. I wish the barn was still standing today. I loved my grandparent’s farm north of Webster in Day County. It was glorious.*

*I think my grandparent’s farm should be preserved for various reasons. First, there are many valuable things that came from the farm. Some of the things my uncles, aunts, cousins, and siblings now have. My aunt’s china has a pink flower pattern. My brother still uses my grandpa’s pocket knives. My uncle has a gun from the farm. My grandpa’s old cowboy hat now belongs to me. In addition, some things are starting to get torn down. The amazing huge barn was torn down because another farmer bought the land. One of the sheds was torn down as well. Finally, the land is still very beautiful. There is also a lot of tall pine trees and green grass. There is also a lot of gorgeous wildlife such as eagles. I have a lot of reasons why my grandparent’s farm should be preserved. It was truly an amazing sight.*

**Winning third place with a story about the Ingalls homestead in De Smet was Kyla Peskey from Holy Trinity Catholic School in Huron.** Kyla won a \$25 cash prize and a one-year family membership to the South Dakota State Historical Society.



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**“My second grade field trip”  
Ingalls Homestead, South Dakota**

*I am going to tell you about my second grade field trip. We went to a few Laura Ingalls Wilder sites, and all of them are in DeSmet. I like it because it is very historical, and cool. First at their farm, we saw their dugout house. One of my classmates thought the house was going to collapse on him. I thought it was cool because when you’re behind it, it looks like a normal dugout. But when you went in front of it, it’s transformed! Then we saw the little barn with horses, cows, sheep and cats. I thought one of the cats was waiting for us to come in! The sheep were pretty cute too. We went to lunch in*

*this little shop, where in the corner were some benches with tables, where we could sit and eat our lunch. Our teacher back then, Mrs. Gilbert, let us buy two things in the store. I only got one, a porcelain doll in a white lace dress. Some people thought the little tiny bells for sale were cool. Then we went to the school house, and played outside some. Next we went in DeSmet, not just in the country, to a house. I thought it was a joke, but then inside we learned how to do our name in braille. Oh, I forgot to tell you, we played a game at the school house. During the game one person went on a square with wheels on it, and another person is trying to pull them. Then each of us got to ring the bell. It was very sunny that day, so we got to roll down a hill. I got very sweaty that day! We got to grind corn, make corn cob dolls, and make straw braids. It was hard work, but we managed to get it done. It matters to me because it is a historical place. It's my favorite place because you learn so much. It should be preserved because it is a mark in history. This place makes me feel good about living in South Dakota. My favorite memory was having a good time with my friends.*

**Congratulations Makena, Josie, and Kyla!**